



# EFFINGHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT

**JEFFREY FUESTING, CHIEF OF POLICE**

201 EAST JEFFERSON AVENUE, EFFINGHAM, ILLINOIS 62401

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Sandi Gillet      Email: [sgillet@effinghamil.com](mailto:sgillet@effinghamil.com)

Phone: 217-342-5326      Fax: 217-342-5345

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### **Scam Calls on the Rise**

During Fall, as the holiday season approaches, scams, particularly scam phone calls, begin to increase. In the past few weeks, Effingham Police Department has handled multiple calls for service from victims who have fallen prey to these schemes.

The recent scam that is making the rounds again is not a new ploy; in fact, it has been used by con artists for years to defraud thousands of dollars from unsuspecting citizens. The target group is the elderly. Scammers call early in the morning or late at night, hoping their victim is sleeping and disorientated, and informs them their grandson (or granddaughter) has been arrested and needs bond money immediately in order to be released. They have done their homework; they usually know the grandchild's name, and create a story line that is quite realistic. They even allow the "grandchild" to speak briefly on the phone to prove the urgency of the matter. Being confused due to the hour of day and nature of the call, many victims state that it sounded just like their grandchild, and are more than willing to wire money, purchase gift cards, or even give credit or debit card information over the phone to the scam artist.

Chief Fuesting wants citizens to know that no matter the variation in the theme of the phone call, that these are all scams, and to never give bank or credit card information to the caller, purchase gift cards or wire money to the caller. "Never give personal information over the phone to callers, including address, social security numbers, bank account numbers or other private information. If you receive a call similar to this, hang up. Contact your grandchild directly (or call their parents) to verify they are alright. The more you are aware of how these scams work, the less likely you are to become their next victim." Chief Fuesting wants to make all citizens aware that Effingham Police Officers do not make these calls. "Members of our department will never call demanding bond money, or make threats to arrest anyone if an immediate payment is not made."

For more information on protecting yourself and your family from fraud such as this, visit <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/scam-alerts> or contact the Office of Community Policing at 217-342-5318.

If you see it, say it! The Effingham Police Department encourages you to call the police department immediately at 217-347-0774 to report suspicious activity in your neighborhood or business district. Information can be given anonymously by calling the CRIMESTOPPERS Tip Line at 217-347-6583. Anonymous callers can receive up to \$1,000 cash rewards.